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ABSTRACT

To assess beliefs related to materialistic values, a 45-item pair comparison questionnaire was administered individually to 120 middle and working class children in kindergarten, third and sixth grades. Item analysis revealed responses of older children were influenced by specific objects mentioned. In contrast, younger children responded more globally, so that overall they (1) preferred the acquisition of material goods to participation in social activity, (2) believed material goods are useful for attaining goals of status as compared to interesting activity or social acceptance, and (3) believed that the attainment of these goals depends on the possession of objects more than on relevant personal attributes. Significant differences between social class groups were also obtained. The findings suggest that as children mature, they become increasingly discriminating in their perception of the instrumental value of material goods for attaining desired ends and provide useful information for those interested in designing programs in value or consumer education. (Author)

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The Relation of Materialistic Values to Age, Socioeconomic Status and Sex

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To assess beliefs related to materialistic values a 45 item pair comparison questionnaire was administered individually to 120 middle and working class children in kindergarten, third and sixth grades. Item analysis revealed responses of older children were influenced by specific objects mentioned. In contrast, younger children responded more globally, so that overall they (a) preferred the acquisition of material goods to participation in social activity ($p < .001$), (b) believed material goods are useful for attaining goals of status as compared to interesting activity or social acceptance ($p < .001$), and (c) believed that the attainment of these goals depends on the possession of objects more than on relevant personal attributes ($p < .001$). Significant differences between social class groups were also obtained.

The findings suggest that as children mature, they become increasingly discriminating in their perception of the instrumental value of material goods for attaining desired ends and provide useful information for those interested in designing programs in value or consumer education.

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Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the development of several aspects of materialistic values in children. The importance of this topic derives both from the prevalence of materialism as a cultural value and from concern expressed by educators, philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists about the predilection for acquiring material goods by people in our society at the expense of the pursuit of other more meaningful endeavors (Knight, 1967; Lipset, 1961; Parsons, 1961; Riesman, 1950; Rozak, 1969; Slater, 1970; Weber, 1930.)

It has been suggested that the value placed on material possessions does not inhere in the intrinsic nature of the goods themselves; instead, it stems mainly from the ability of material objects to enhance one's feelings of self-esteem and security as a consequence of the social approval and recognition they are instrumental in attaining (e.g. Desmonde, 1962; Fromm, 1947; Horney, 1937; Lipset, 1961; Packard, 1950; Veblen, 1899). A second reason is the illogical belief, encouraged by those who would profit from its preservation, that possession of material goods, similar to those owned by others, will lead to the satisfactions which these others are perceived as enjoying (e.g. Bayer and Greyser, 1968; Knight, 1967; Packard, 1950; Riesman, 1950; Ward, 1971; Wells, 1965).

The result, it has been asserted, is that material objects become hollow symbols of the "good life." Critics have suggested

that materialism is a contributory factor to social and personal alienation and dissatisfaction; it has been cited as a cause of the disillusionment of the young, who have claimed American society is hypocritical, that it has sold its basic moral values for the lure of material gain (Flacks, 1969; Kenniston, 1970; King, 1972; Reich, 1970; Rozak, 1969; Slater, 1970).

Although materialism has been widely discussed, very little is known about its developmental bases in childhood, nor has an operational definition been formulated. In an effort to remedy this lack of information, an exploration was undertaken of the way in which material goods are viewed and valued by young children.

For the purpose of this investigation, a distinction employed by social psychologists in their study of values and beliefs was adopted (e.g. Barthol and Bridges, 1968; McGuire, 1969; Rokeach, 1968; Woodruff, 1952). Within this framework, values are differentiated into two types: (a) terminal values, which serve as ends, the goals toward which the individual strives; and (b) instrumental values, which serve as means, the behavior he employs in order to attain these ends. Materialistic values were defined as instrumental values. It was assumed that material goods are valued, primarily, because it is believed that their possession will lead to the attainment of desired goals. Three types of goals were specified. The first is to engage in individual activities intrinsic to the nature of the

object; for example, making things, doing interesting things or learning may be facilitated by possession of a particular object. The second is social participation where interaction is facilitated by the acquisition of objects which are similar to those owned by one's peers or which others admire and want to use. In both cases, ownership of a material good stimulates others to encourage the possessor to engage in some activity with them. The third divided into two components, is an increase in status, either in terms of self image or in the opinion of others. Ownership of a material good allows the individual to believe he possesses an attribute he did not have before or to think of himself as being better in some way than others. In addition, possessions may also impress others so that they think of the individual as having some desirable quality. The result may be that the individual's opportunity for engagement with others is increased.

Based on this formulation, two parallel forms of an instrument were developed to measure the growth of beliefs constituting the foundation of materialistic values. The instrument was designed to assess three aspects of the structure of materialistic values. The first was the relative strength of preference for the acquisition of material goods as contrasted with the direct attainment of social contact. The second was the relative strength of three bases for valuing material goods: (a) as instrumental for pursuing individual activities; (b) as

leading to social acceptance and providing the opportunity for social interaction; and (c) as symbols which lend prestige and status to their owners, either in terms of self-appraisal or the reflected appraisal of others. The third aspect was the child's beliefs about the necessity of material goods for attaining these goals.

The pattern of development of these three facets of materialistic values was studied in relation to age, sex, and socioeconomic status. It was presumed that the development of materialistic values during the years of middle childhood would progress through several phases, influenced by both the increasing social orientation and cognitive maturation of the child. The value placed on the accumulation of material goods for their own sake was expected to decline whereas social goals were expected to increase in strength; thus, when given a choice between the acquisition of material goods or participation in a social activity, older more than younger children were expected to prefer the latter option.

Moreover, it was anticipated that the bases for valuing material goods as instrumental for attaining social ends would increase with age. The expectation was that upon entry into school, young children would value material goods for reasons intrinsic to the satisfaction or pleasure which the goods provide. In contrast, children in the middle elementary grades, concerned with conformity to group standards and gaining acceptance

(Devereux, 1968, Hartup, 1970; Iscoe, Williams and Harvey, 1964) would desire material goods because they are instrumental means of gaining peer approval and acceptance. Based on evidence suggesting an increasing ability to recognize the connotative significance of material goods (Borrow, 1966; Stendler, 1949; Stewart, 1958) it was predicted that older children would be more likely to presume that the mere fact of possession would lend prestige to the owner in his own estimation or in the eyes of others. As a result, they would desire material goods for their ability to provide opportunities for social contact gained primarily from the attainment of status.

Specifically, it was hypothesized that a comparison of choices made by children in grades K, 3, and 6 when given various pairs of reasons for wanting material goods would indicate that: (a) more kindergarteners chose activities intrinsic to the nature of the object; (b) more third graders chose social contact; and (c) more sixth graders chose social status.

Beliefs about the necessity of material goods for attaining these goals were presumed to vary in a similar fashion; it was predicted that when given a choice between the possession of a material good or a relevant personal attribute as most probably leading to three types of goals: (a) kindergarteners would select material goods as necessary for individual activity; (b) third graders would select material goods as necessary for

social acceptance and social contact; and (c) sixth graders would select material goods as necessary for social status.

In addition, a variety of evidence (e.g. Bruner and Goldman, 1947; Havighurst, 1970; Hess, 1969; Terrell, 1958; Terrell and Kennedy, 1957) pointed to the probability that materialistic values would differ depending on social class background so that more children of low as compared with middle socioeconomic status would: (a) choose the acquisition of material goods more often than the attainment of social contact; and (b) choose activities intrinsic to the nature of the goods as reasons for wanting these objects.

With regard to sex differences, based on the results of numerous studies (e.g. Bardwick, 1971; Crandall, 1963; Garai and Schienfeld, 1968; Maccoby, 1966), it was predicted that girls earlier than boys, would (a) prefer the establishment of social relationships more than the acquisition of material goods; (b) value objects as instrumental for gaining social contact, and (c) believe that material goods are necessary for attaining peer group acceptance and social status.

Method

For the purpose of this investigation, two methodological procedures, the development and validation of an instrument and the administration of the instrument to test the hypotheses advanced, were carried out. Two parallel forms of the instrument along with pictures were used. The items were planned to assess three facts of the development of materialistic values: (a) the relative strength of the value of acquisition of material goods as compared with the value of social relationships; (b) the relative strength of reasons for which material goods are wanted in order to determine those values material goods are viewed as instrumental in attaining; (c) beliefs about the efficacy of material goods as compared with other alternative ways for attaining these values.

Subjects

One hundred and twenty boys and girls, half middle and half working class, were drawn equally from kindergarten, third, and sixth grade classrooms. Their mean ages were six years, eight years ten months, and eleven years ten months respectively.

The sample included thirty children from two schools in middle class neighborhoods and thirty from two schools in working class neighborhoods. A check of paternal occupation showed that the fathers of the middle class children were professionals whereas the fathers of the working class children were employed predominantly in automobile factories.

Instrument

For each of the three types of questions described, a specific set of items was designed. Several question generating rules were proposed along with a content pool to be used in preparing questions. The pool included: (a) material goods, referred to in general terms as classes of objects, such as presents or toys, in order to control for ownership, previous experience or preferences that children might have with regard to specific objects; (b) a list of social values to be used in set I; (c) phrases representing four types of reasons for wanting material goods, for set II;and (d) tests of goal statements and personal qualities for set III.

In order to determine question format and content, thirty children, representative of those to be sampled in the final study were individually interviewed. The interviews were open-ended in order to assess comprehensibility and appropriateness of syntax, wording and content of the questions. Children's reasons for their answers were used to decide whether choices posed in paired comparison situations were equally attractive.

Items were deleted on the basis of the above criteria and lists of content were altered to match children's definitions of specific words and phrases.

In addition, ten judges were used to help establish validity. Five males and five females, including three professors of child psychology, two professors of education, and five doctoral candidates in these fields, all of whom had teaching or research experience with elementary school children participated.

All judges were asked to classify reasons for wanting material goods and value statements according to the conceptualizations explained previously. Five were asked to rate a list of material goods and five were asked to rate a list of personal attributes. Criteria for judgments were the following: (a) Is each item within the realm of experience of kindergarten, third and sixth grade children?; (b) Is the item something that both boys and girls would want to have?; and (c) Is the item something that both working and middle class children would want to have?

In addition, due to the large number of possible questions generated, half the proposed items for each of the three question sets were given to five judges and half to the other five. They were asked to accept or reject questions on the basis of: (a) comprehensibility; (b) clarity of choices posed; and (c) equal attractiveness of the alternatives.

Any item which attained an 80% agreement was retained. Questions for Sets I, II, and III which were composed of these items and also rated acceptable by four of five judges were used in the pool from which the final instrument was developed. Two parallel forms of the instrument were used to control for the possibility that content of a specific set of questions might influence results. On each form there were 45 items, seven on Set I, twenty onSet II, and eighteen on Set III.

Questions on Sets I and II were accompanied by pictures. The drawings, one set for boys and another for girls, were used to heighten interest and to decrease relianceon memory by providing a reference point for the child. Wherever possible, the pictures were chosen from a study of values conducted by Guiford, Gupta, and Goldberg (1972). These pictures had been tested and revised several times to minimize potential distractions that might influence the child's response. No pictures were developed for Set III since the questions posed dealt with value attainment and personal qualities, both of which could not be exemplified easily.

Question formats, scoring information and dependent variables are described in Table 1. Lists of content from which the questions were designed can be found in Appendix A. In all, there were fifteen dependent measures: (a) one for Set I, the number of choices of acquisition of material goods as compared to the direct attainment of social contacts; (b) ten for Set II, the proportion of choices of several types of values presented in paired comparison questions as reasons for wanting material goods; and (c) four for Set III, the number of choices of material goods versus personal attributes or behaviors as more probably leading to the attainment of three types of values, as well as each of the values scored separately.

TABLE 1

GENERAL PLAN OF QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS
WITH SCORING INFORMATION

Item Form	Sets		
	I	II	III
Stem	Which child would you like to be?	This child got material good Why did he/she want it?	Who gets V1 (individual activity) V2 (social acceptance) V3 (status)
Response alternative	The child who has 1. Material good or 2. Social value	1. V1-because of reasons related to intrinsic nature of material good or 2. V2-because of reasons related to social activity and acceptance or 3. V3-because of reasons related to enhanced self-image or 4. V4-because of reasons related to status in terms of the reflected appraisal of others	The child who has 1. Material good or 2. Personal attribute

TABLE 1 --Continued

Score	Sets		
	I	II	III
Variable names (# items)	I. Total (7)	(A) II. V1-V2 (4) II. V1-V3 (4) II. V1-V4 (4) II. V2-V3 (4) II. V2-V4 (4) (B) II. V1 (12) II. V2 (12) II. V3 (8) II. V4 (8) II. V3+4 (16)	III. Mat V1 III. Mat V2 III. Mat V3 III. Total V1+2+3 (18)
Scoring	1 = material 0 = social	(A) 1 = Selection of first value in pair 0 = second value in pair (B) Proportion of total times listed value selected relative to other values	1 = material 0 = personal attribute
High Score	Acquisitive	(A) First value in pair is chosen as reason for wanting material goods (B) Proportion of times value listed is chosen as reason for wanting material goods	materialistic

Design

The experimental design was a 3 x 2 x 2 x 2 complete factorial. Subjects were divided equally in terms of grade, sex and socioeconomic status and randomly assigned to take either Form A or Form B of the instrument. Of the sixty children who took each form, from each social class, ten were boys and ten were girls at each grade level. For half of the children who took each form, the order of the questions posed as well as the order of the choices provided were reversed.

Four experimenters, two males and two females, doctoral candidates in developmental or educational psychology, conducted the interviews. All had had previous research experience with elementary school children. Each experimenter interviewed a total of thirty children, fifteen on Form A and fifteen on Form B. They questioned an equal number of boys and girls at each level of grade and socioeconomic status.

Procedure

Each child was individually interviewed during a session that lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes. The experimenter told the child:

> "Hi. I'm going to show you some pictures and ask you some questions. I'm interested in finding out about what kids your age think, the kinds of things they like to get and some reasons why.
>
> I got these questions from talking to lots of children from other schools in a whole bunch of different cities. So I'll ask you some questions and you tell me what you think about them.
>
> Remember this isn't a test and there are no right answers or wrong answers. I'm only writing down what you say because I talk to so many children it's hard for me to remember what they say. In fact, the children I've talked to gave lots of different answers to the questions. I'm just interested in what you think and there are no wrong answers. No one will know what you say because your name is not on this paper. So you can tell me anything you want to."

A sample question for each of the three sets followed. The child was cautioned that the pictures were presented "only to help show you what the question says. So if you don't like something in the picture but like what it means, you should choose it." To illustrate the latter point, the first example stated:

Which child would you like to be?

The child who has a new paint set but who doesn't go many places with his friends

-or-

The child who goes lots of places with his friends but who doesn't have a new paint set.

One accompanying picture showed a child with a paint set and easel. The other showed three children walking in the rain. The child was told, "if you like going places with your friends better than getting a new paint set, but you don't like going places in the rain, then you should still choose this picture."

Results

Instrument

Several analyses were performed to examine various aspects of the instrument. First, in order to access whether samples responding to questions on each form differed, eleven identical items were included on the two forms. A nonparametric test of the differences between two proportions was carried out (Bruning and Kintz, 1968). Proportions derived from a sum of choices on all identical items showed no significant differences in the pattern of responses of the two groups on these items. (p=.452)

Second, reliability estimates for the three types of questions were obtained in terms of internal consistency (coefficient alpha) and were .72, .70, and .65 for sets I, II, and III respectively. It should be noted that two elements in the design of the instruments may have lowered reliabilities. First, the aim of the instrument was to assess instrumental values with regard to material goods in a variety of situations. Since preferences are often situation specific, and might be influenced by particular material goods, it is not unexpected that choices were not highly consistent. In addition, a relatively small number of items was used for each set and its subcomponents due to the number of issues explored and the time constraints of testing young children.

Relations between age, sex, socioeconomic status and materialistic Values

An overview of the results of the analysis of variance in age, sex, socioeconomic status, on the fifteen varialbes, is presented in Table 2. As previously explained, evidence indicates

TABLE 2

FACTORIAL ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR MAIN TREATMENT EFFECTS AND SIGNIFICANT INTERACTIONS

Factors	Variable	MS	F	p
Grade	I. total	94.67	46.85	.0001**
df=2	II. V1-V2	11.77	10.17	.0001**
error df=96	II. V1-V3	10.56	9.12	.0003**
	II. V1-V4	10.56	11.79	.0001**
	II. V2-V3	3.51	2.35	.1013
	II. V2-V4	5.63	4.76	.0107*
	II. V1	0.68	23.03	.0001**
	II. V2	0.00	0.10	.9027
	II. V3	0.33	5.75	.0044**
	II. V4	0.47	12.61	.0001**
	II. V3+4	0.36	11.78	.0001**
	III. mat V1	27.73	28.69	.0001**
	III. mat V2	40.91	33.17	.0001**
	III. mat V3	68.40	26.31	.0001**
	III. mat total	396.07	42.00	.0001**
Sex	I. total	4.41	2.18	.1430
df=1	II. V1-V2	0.01	0.01	.9326
error df=96	II. V1-V3	0.01	0.01	.9326
	II. V1-V4	0.41	0.46	.5013
	II. V2-V3	0.53	0.36	.5519
	II. V2-V4	0.08	0.06	.8018
	II. V1	0.00	0.10	.7576
	II. V2	0.00	0.05	.8226
	II. V3	0.01	0.18	.6706
	II. V4	0.01	0.35	.5575
	II. V3+4	0.00	0.00	.9741
	III. mat V1	1.01	1.04	.3097
	III. mat V2	0.03	0.03	.8698
	III. mat V3	0.01	0.00	.9550
	III. mat total	0.83	0.09	.7670
SES	I. total	9.08	4.49	.0367*
df=1	II. V1-V2	2.41	2.08	.1526
error df=96	II. V1-V3	3.01	2.60	.1104
	II. V1-V4	0.68	0.75	.3876
	II. V2-V3	2.70	1.81	.1823
	II. V2-V4	10.21	8.63	.0042**
	II. V1	0.12	3.96	.0495*
	II. V2	0.08	1.82	.1805
	II. V3	0.18	3.08	.0827
	II. V4	0.25	6.71	.0111*
	II. V3+4	0.21	6.99	.0096**

TABLE 2 -- Continued

Factors	Variable	MS	F	p
Grade	III. mat V1	4.41	4.56	.0353*
df=1	III. mat V2	0.53	.43	.5124
error df=96	III. mat V3	5.21	2.00	.1602
	III. mat total	26.13	2.77	.0993
Grade x Sex	II. V2-V4	4.30	3.63	.0302*
df=2				
error df=96				
Grade x SES	II. V2-V4	4.43	3.75	.0272*
df=2	II. V3+4	0.15	4.96	.0089**
error df=96	II. V2	0.16	3.87	.0242*
	II. V4	0.15	4.06	.0204*

*P < .05

**P < .01

that form did not contribute to the differences found. Therefore, all information given is on the results of both forms combined. The few second order effects which occurred are also included. Means and standard deviations for each of the factors on which the analyses were computed can be found in Table 3.

Age (grade)

Results of the analysis of responses revealed many significant effects for the factor of age, indicating that materialistic values change as the child matures. In order to determine where the significant differences were exhibited, t tests were performed comparing each grade against the other. Table 4 presents the comparisons between each of the grade levels for each of the variables. In describing the results of this analysis, differences discussed are those that are significant at less than the .05 level.

Data bearing on the relationship between grade and materialistic values indicates that:

1. The relative strength of the value of acquisition of material goods as compared with the value of direct attainment of social contact without reference to material goods decreases with age. Kindergarteners chose fewer social alternatives than did third graders; third graders chose fewer of these than did sixth graders on Set I.

2. Material goods are valued as instrumental for the pursuit of individual activity intrinsic to the nature of the good more by third and sixth graders than by kindergarteners as

TABLE 3

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR GRADE, SEX, AND SES ON FORMS A AND B COMBINED

Variable	No. items		Grade			Sex		SES		Total
			K	3	6	Male	Female	Working	Middle	
		M. S.D.	N=40	N=40	N=40	N=60	N=60	N=60	N=60	N=120
I. Total	7	M	3.75	1.75	0.73	1.88	2.27	2.35	1.80	2.08
		SD	1.48	1.74	1.01	1.81	2.00	1.89	1.89	1.91
II. V1-V2	4	M	2.35	3.33	3.25	2.97	2.98	2.83	3.12	2.98
		SD	1.23	0.89	0.95	1.12	1.13	1.18	1.04	1.12
II. V1-V3	4	M	2.05	2.90	2.98	2.65	2.63	2.48	2.80	2.64
		SD	1.09	1.15	1.12	1.15	1.24	1.28	1.07	1.19
II. V1-V4	4	M	2.25	3.18	3.10	2.78	2.90	2.77	2.92	2.84
		SD	1.03	0.81	0.93	1.03	1.00	1.03	1.00	1.01
II. V2-V3	4	M	1.60	1.63	2.13	1.85	1.25	1.63	1.93	1.78
		SD	1.24	1.25	1.16	1.72	1.22	1.15	1.30	1.23
II. V2-V4	4	M	1.78	2.53	2.18	2.13	2.18	1.87	2.45	2.16
		SD	1.12	1.40	0.93	1.30	1.10	1.14	1.19	1.20
II. V1	12	MP[a]	0.55	0.78	0.78	0.70	0.71	0.67	0.74	0.71
		SD	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.13	0.20

TABLE 3 --Continued

Variable	No. items		Grade K	Grade 3	Grade 6	Sex Male	Sex Female	SES Working	SES Middle	Total
		M. S.D.	N=40	N=40	N=40	N=60	N=60	N=60	N=60	N=120
II. V2	12	MP	0.42	0.40	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.39	0.44	0.41
		SD	0.22	0.23	0.16	0.21	0.19	0.20	0.21	0.20
II. V3	8	MP	0.54	0.43	0.36	0.44	0.46	0.49	0.41	0.45
		SD	0.25	0.25	0.23	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.25
II. V4	8	MP	0.50	0.29	0.34	0.39	0.37	0.42	0.33	0.38
		SD	0.19	0.23	0.19	0.25	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.22
II. V3+4	16	MP	0.52	0.36	0.35	0.41	0.41	0.45	0.37	0.41
		SD	0.16	0.22	0.17	0.21	0.18	0.19	0.20	0.20
III.Mat V1	4	M	1.88	0.68	0.28	1.03	0.85	1.13	0.75	0.94
		SD	1.18	1.00	0.60	1.29	1.04	1.26	1.05	1.17
III.Mat V2	6	M	2.38	0.88	0.45	1.22	1.25	1.30	1.17	1.23
		SD	1.35	1.07	0.75	1.47	1.24	1.48	1.24	1.36
III.Mat V3	8	M	3.53	1.43	1.13	2.03	2.07	2.23	1.82	2.03
		SD	1.94	1.69	1.09	2.02	1.79	1.83	2.01	1.93
III.Mat total	18	M	7.78	2.98	1.85	4.28	4.12	4.67	3.73	4.20
		SD	3.48	3.36	1.86	4.28	3.59	3.99	3.85	3.93

[a]MP = Mean Proportion

TABLE 4.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN EACH OF THE GRADE LEVELS FOR MAIN VARIABLES (GRADE K, N=40; GRADE 3, N=40; GRADE 6, N=40)

Variable	Means			K-3		3-6		K-6	
	K	3	6	t	GT	t	GT	t	GT
I	3.75	1.75	.73	5.54***	K>3	3.21**	3>6	10.51***	K>6
II V1-V2	2.35	3.33	3.25	4.08***	3>K	.39		3.56***	6>K
V1-V3	2.05	2.90	2.98	4.68***	3>K	.32		3.76***	6>K
V1-V4	2.25	3.18	3.10	4.49***	3>K	.41		3.54***	6>K
V2-V3	1.60	1.63	2.13	.11		1.85		1.97	
V2-V4	1.76	2.53	2.18	2.72**	3>K	1.32		1.83	
II V1	.55[a]	.78[a]	.78[a]	5.88***	3>K	0.00		5.88***	6>K
V2	.42[a]	.40[a]	.42[a]	.40		.45		0.00	
V3	.54[a]	.43[a]	.36[a]	1.97		1.30		3.35**	K>6
V4	.50[a]	.29[a]	.34[a]	4.45***	K>3	1.06		3.76***	K>6
V3+V4	.52[a]	.36[a]	.35[a]	3.71***	K>3	.22		4.61***	K>6
III Mat V1	1.88	.68	.28	4.98***	K>3	2.17*	3>6	7.64***	K>6
Mat V2	2.38	.88	.45	5.51***	K>3	1.76		9.34***	K>6
Mat V3	3.53	1.43	1.13	5.16***	K>3	.94		6.82***	K>6
Mat Total	7.78	2.98	1.85	6.28***	K>3	1.86		9.51***	K>6

[a]Mean Proportion

df = 78 t

* p < .05 1.99

** p < .01 2.64

*** p < .001 3.43

indicated by responses to Set II. On the other hand, the latter group values material goods as instrumental for attaining status, either in terms of self-appr.sal or the reflected appraisal of others. No differences were found in the degree to which children of all grade levels selected social interaction as a reason for wanting material goods.

3. The belief in the necessity of material goods for engaging in interesting individual activity decreases with age. Kindergarteners more than third and third more than sixth graders chose material goods more than relevant personal attributes as likely to facilitate attainment of this goal on Set III. However, kindergarteners more than both third and sixth graders believe that material goodsare important for gaining social acceptance and status.

It is of import to note that these findings reflect the fact that, whereas kindergarteners were in most cases almost equally divided in their choices, older children were more discriminating. The distribution of their responses was more differentiated, thereby influencing the differences found. The fact that responses for kindergarteners on the different question sets tended to be equally divided between alternatives may indicate the possibility of blind guessing or lack of comprehension. However, this interpretation seems unlikely in view of the precautions taken which included the use of pilot testing to examine question format and content, the use of two forms of an instrument with varied positioning of question

and response options, and the use of pictures to decrease reliance on memory and increase understanding. Moreover, results of analysis of individual items showed that in more than one third of the cases, responses of the kindergarteners were divided by at least a 70-30 split. The fact that responses of young children were not consistently at chance level makes it likely that the results are an accurate reflection of the developmental differences as measured by the instrument.

In order to further examine the nature of age differences, chi square analyses for each item on both forms of the instrument were computed. The results suggest that the finding that materialistic values change with age is a reflection of increasing differentation of responses by older as compared to younger children. Whereas younger children responded in a somewhat global fashion, the choices of older children were strongly influenced by the example of the material good given as well as the particular value indicated.

For example, on Set I, significant differences were found in eleven of fourteen questions. Of these, in eight questions, the social value depicted was "have lots of friends" or "asked to play a lot." These examples of social contact were paired with material goods. Older children tended to overwhelmingly select these values, whereas younger children were more evenly divided with regard to their preferences. It should also be noted that in questions in which toys or games appeared, less than 10% of sixth graders chose these alternatives; however, when money was mentioned, the distribution, although skewed, was much less extreme.

Similarly, on Set II, when asked about articles like toys and games, older children tended to choose reasons related to individual activity with the material good. However, when presented with material good like presents, which offer wider options for use, they were just as likely to select status as a reason for wanting these objects. In a majority of items in which money appeared, when status was one of the reasons possible for wanting this good, no significant differences were found between the three grade levels.

On Set III, older children overwhelmingly chose personal attributes as opposed to material goods as likely to lead to each of the values indicated. Almost all distributions differed by grade level. However, it is of interest to note that no significant differences were found for items in which "good ideas," "plays fair," and "shares" were the personal qualities depicted. It may be that these attributes are equally important to younger and older children, wheras many of the other attributes mentioned may not yet play a salient role in the lives of kindergarteners.

To summarize, the findings presented in this section provide consistent evidence for the view that at all age levels, the uses to which material goods are put are numerous. However, the younger child, when compared with those more mature, is less discriminating in his reasons for wanting these goods and in his beliefs about the necessity of their possession for attaining a variety of goals.

In contrast, although third and sixth graders want material goods for a variety of reasons, their perceptions of the instrumental value of particular objects for attaining valued ends is more differentiated. Those items like toys and tools which lend themselves to specific uses are desired for individual activity. Other goods, however, which are more general in nature and offer more options for use are just as likely to be desired for reasons of individual activity as for reasons of social acceptance and status.

Sex

No differences were found to indicate the value placed on material goods differs by sex on either the analysis of variance or the chi square distributions. It is probable that efforts to make the material goods, reasons and goals equally attractive to both boys and girls were highly successful.

Socioeconomic status

Results of the analysis of responses indicated differences between working and middle class children as follows:

1. The relative strength of the value of acquisition of material goods as compared with the value of direct attainment of social contact without reference to material goods differs for children of working and middle class. Working class children selected the acquisition of material goods more often than did middle class children.

2. Reasons for wanting material goods varied in that individual activity was preferred more by middle class than by working class children. There was a significant interaction of grade and socioeconomic class regarding status

as a reason for wanting material goods; working class children, especially at younger ages, selected status, primarily in terms of the reflected appraisal of others, more than did middle class children. No differences were found in the degree to which children of both social classes value material goods because they provide the opportunity for social interaction, except at the third grade level, where middle class children chose reasons of social activity more than did those of lower class as a basis for wanting material goods.

3. Beliefs about the necessity of possession of material goods for engaging in interesting individual activity differ for children of working and middle class. Working class, more than middle class youngsters, chose material goods more often than a relevant personal attribute as likely to facilitate the attainment of this goal. However, there was no significant difference between the groups in their beliefs about the importance of possessing material goods for gaining social acceptance or social status.

Discussion

Although the data indicate that there are developmental differences in materialistic values, several of the findings were not in the direction predicted. Responses indicated that the child, regardless of the goals sought, becomes more discriminating in his view of the role that material goals fulfill. As anticipated the relative strength of the value of the acquisition of material goods as compared with the strength of the value of the attainment of social contact decreased with age. This finding is in agreement with other evidence (e.g. Hartup, 1970) which suggests that young children are not as concerned as their older counterparts with gaining peer group acceptance and thus chose the accumulation of material goods rather than the cultivation of interpersonal relationships.

However, the relative strength of group interaction as a reason for wanting material goods did not increase with age. Instead, children's answers revealed an increasingly differentiated perception of the instrumental value of material goods for attaining this and other goals. The findings indicated that older children, more than younger, chose individual activity as a reason for wanting material goods; when compared to the former group, a greater proportion of kindergarteners valued material goods as instrumental for attaining status.

The differences found can be attributed to the fact that young children tended to respond in a global fashion; the

distribution of scores for kindergarteners were divided almost equally among several different reasons. In contrast, the pattern of responses of the older children was more differentiated. The fact that this group was more discriminating, resulted in the finding of differing proportion of choices among the three grade levels.

Moreover, selections of third and sixth graders were highly dependent upon the particular material good in question. It appears that some objects, like toys and games, are by their very nature intrinsically valuable because they allow the child to pursue certain activities. Other items are believed to be instrumental for gaining social status, while many are used to facilitate social interaction.

The younger child failed to make these finer distinctions and responded in a more global fashion. This fact may explain the seemingly contradictory finding that more younger children indicated they want material goods for reasons of status. Upon entrance into kindergarten, the child is confronted with the need to establish a modicum of independent status for himself outside the home in the world of his peers. During this period both competition and social comparison increase (Masters, 1971). It seems reasonable to assume that the responses obtained from kindergarteners reflect both concrete thinking and the need to enhance power and prestige. Essentially, the desire for material goods for reasons of enhanced status may be

seen as a consequence of the need to demonstrate competence and superiority, in a situation where the child's valuation of objects is influenced by an egocentric nature. The young child's cognitive immaturity obscures his understanding of socially agreed upon norms and standards. Thus, it is probable that the prestige he seeks through material goods is not symbolic, as defined in the present study, but concrete; it is to have either more or better objects than others. In this sense, any judgment of status is an outgrowth of the child's own exaggerated views, which need not be shared with nor confirmed by others.

Another related explanation of the failure of younger children to make the finer distinctions displayed by third and sixth graders is the possibility that they have fewer paths available than older children for realizing their goals. Support for this interpretation is provided by results of children's choices on questions pairing possession of material goods with relevant personal qualities as alternative ways to attain valued goals. Younger children more than older, were likely to believe that material goods are necessary to pursue interesting individual activity, gain social contact and attain status. These findings may reflect the fact that for the young child the paths available for realizing these goals is limited. With increasing experience and maturity, his range of options widens, resulting in a decreased reliance on material goods.

In addition, an increase in cognitive ability enables older children to respond to more abstract rather than concrete factors in a situation; intellectual maturity enables the child to recognize the importance of individual initiative as compared with possession of tangible objects for attaining desired goals. Evidence from several areas of investigation suggest that children's judgments become more influenced by internal rather than external aspects of situations as they grow older (Weiner, 1972; Hoffman, 1971; Gollin, 1958). It is probable, therefore, that when posed with the choice of reaching a goal by external means such as material goods or via personal qualities, the older child takes the latter into account whereas the younger child, bound by more concrete thinking, is likely to choose material goods.

The findings with regard to the relationship between socioeconomic status and materialistic values can be accounted for in a similar manner. In general, the pattern of responses of working class children was similar to the pattern of younger children as a whole. When compared to their middle class counterparts, working class children: (a) chose the acquisition of material goods more than the attainment of social contact; (b) selected status as a reason for wanting material goods; and (c) believed that the ownership of material goods more than the possession of relevant personal attributes was more likely to lead to interesting individual activity.

The fact that these differences, especially with regard to the second finding mentioned, decreased with age makes it reasonable to assume that these results reflect a lack of differentiation by working class children in their perception of the instrumental value of material goods for attaining desired ends. In contract, the middle class child, at an earlier age, has a more sharply delineated perception of the various goals which material goods can satisfy. This difference may be a consequence of both greater cognitive maturity and the wider range of opportunities and avenues available to middle class as compared to working class youngsters for realizing valued ends.

It is important to note that despite results which suggest that material goods are not considered to be of primary importance for reaching valued ends by older children, this study did not provide evidence with regard to beliefs about the relative significances of material goods in comparison with other ways for attaining these goals. The fact that a forced choice rather than a ranking technique was employed, due to the inability of kindergarteners to rank options, prevented acquiring this information.

Qualitative analyses of responses to individual questions did show that a large proportion of the children sampled use material goods to meet what have been described as "nonmaterial motives." It would be of interest to explore this issue further

using additional measures such as in-depth interviews, behavioral observations or projective instruments since it has been suggested that materialism is the result of subtle and often subconscious processes (Krugman, 1965; 1971; Knight, 1968; Levy, 1959; Martineau, 1957). In effect, beliefs that the acquisition of objects will lead to fulfillment of desires may not be easily obtained using a structured questionnaire.

An additional point is that materialism has been discussed primarily in relation to adults. It may be that although the bases for this value system are formed prior to adolescence, it is not until youngsters begin to compete for monetary rewards in the job market, that these values become amplified; at this time material possessions may become increasingly important as indicators of success and of self worth.

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Appendix A
Item formats and content for Sets I, II and III

Material goods:

games	sports equipment
toys	clothes
money to buy things	tools
presents	musical instrument
new bike	record player

Set I

Item format:

Which child would you like to be?

The child who has lots of (material good) but doesn't have/get (social goal).

-or-

The child who has/gets (social goal) but doesn't have lots of (material good).

Social goals:

asked to play; invited to parties; friends; join the club; join the team

Set II

Item format:

This child has/got (material good)
Why did he/she want it?
Reason type 1; (2)
-or-
Reason type 2; (3; or 4)

Types of Reasons:

1. Individual activity	--Because he could learn from it (them). --Because his old bike was hard to ride. --Because he could make things with it. --Because he could do interesting things with it --Because he could listen to his favorite music
2. Social interaction	--Because all his friends had one and he was left out --Because no one had one like it and they would want to come use it.
3. Status--self-appraisal	--Because it would make him feel more grown up. --Because it would make him feel like a star player (famous rock and roll star). --Because it would make him feel special. --Because it would make him feel like the best kid.

4. Status--reflected appraisal of others	--Because it would make people think he is the most fun to be with --Because people would think he was special --Because it would make people think he is strong (handsome/pretty). --Because it would make people think he is rich. --Because people will think he is smart.

Set III

Item format:
Value statement 1; (2; or 3)

The child who has (material goods) but doesn't have a (personal attribute)

or

The child who has (personal attribute) but doesn't have (material goods)

Types of Value Statements:

1. Individual activity	--Who does interesting things? --Who makes nice things? --Who gets to learn a lot?
2. Social interaction	--Who gets asked to join the club? --Who usually gets asked to play? --Who gets invited to a lot of parties? --Who gets chosen to play in the game?
3. Status	--Who is the happiest? --Who is the most fun to be with? --Who would everyone like to be? --Who gets to decide what to do? --Who do people think is most special? --Who do you think is the best kid?

Personal attributes:

fun to play with	pretty/handsome
plays fair	smart
friendly	someone people listen to
good player	try hard
good ideas	act grown up
good at doing things	helpful
know good things to do	share